



St.Gallen (Tonhalle), 30. November 2012

CEMS Annual Events 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen

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I am proud and happy to welcome you today to the city and Kanton of St. Gallen. In the academic landscape of Switzerland with its twelve universities, the University of St.Gallen holds a very special position. For a start, we are a university which is dedicated to the core subjects of Management, Economics, Law, Social Sciences and International Affairs, a clearly specialized university. But there are other factors: When the Bologna reform hit, we were the first to conceptualize and implement it, taking the opportunity to take our educational performance up to a new level of quality. We are financed by the Kanton and Federation, but only at the rate of 50 %; the other fifty percent of our budget are generated by ourselves, which in actual numbers means that our entrepreneurial activities bring in roughly 100 million Swiss francs per year. Also, these days our ranking results positively reflect the effort we continuously put into improving our quality, as only a short time ago we reached first place in the Financial Times Ranking for our Master Program in Strategy and International Management – and we are no less proud to share the third place of this ranking with all the other CEMS schools.

The participation of the University of St.Gallen in the CEMS network is a very important part of the activities which constitute our profile. The government of our Kanton and the university council highly appreciate all the energy and dedication which the CEMS community invests into offering the CEMS students a unique educational experience. This effort is an important element of our strategy. A short time ago, the University of St. Gallen has formulated a vision for the year 2020. This vision says the following:

"As one of Europe's leading business universities, we are recognized globally as a place for thought leadership on current economic, business, and societal matters and for the development of talent able to integrate perspectives and act both entrepreneurially and responsibly."

In other words, the university has committed itself to what we believe to be at the heart of business and management education today: excellent interdisciplinary research, a strong,



problem-oriented focus on the practical realities of business and its challenges, and last but not least an equally strong focus on socially responsible leadership. Over the last years our output in excellent research has already increased significantly, due to, among other factors, our focus on practical problem-solving. Therefore, in this as in other respects the CEMS network with its close involvement of corporate partners is a perfect answer to our educational philosophy.

The same goes for the education of responsible leaders. To this end we think it highly important that students should acquire not only a huge range of intellectual and practical skills, but also a broad perspective on the global embeddedness of their life and work. However, as you all undoubtedly know, this global perspective always needs to be firmly anchored in its regional port of origin. In other words, to act successfully all around the world in our opinion is only possible if one knows where one comes from and what shaped one's perception and values. For this reason, we have recently introduced a new language policy at our university: As of fall 2013, all students at our university will be required to complete their coursework in what we call a "hybrid" framework, that means, they will take courses both in English and in German, so that at the end of their studies they will be basically fluent in both – one the international lingua franca of academia and business, the other the language of our regional history and culture. At the university of St. Gallen we are convinced that international connections and regional roots are two sides of the same medal, complementing and stabilizing each other: The university's international outlook significantly enhances the quality of the knowledge which we transfer into the region, and on the other side our close ties to our regional and national culture and their impact on our academic culture which give us our identity.

Today, universities compete globally for the best scholars, the best students, and, of course, for reputation, that is, for the same resources. This means that top universities like those whose representatives are gathered here in this room theoretically always are in danger of becoming too similar to be told apart. And it is perhaps one of the most important assets of the CEMS network that the universities involved in it are not an amorphous mass but, to the contrary, a configuration of very individual and highly profiled institutions which therefore is much more than merely the sum of its parts.

On that note, allow me once again to warmly welcome you to our Kanton, to congratulate you on all you – or rather we – have already achieved, and to express my hope that our cooperation will continue to grow and flourish. And, of course and most of all, now I wish you a very lovely time in St. Gallen. Thank you.